

Saturday 15 June – Sunday 4 August 1996

EARTH and EVERYTHING

Recent Art from South Africa



Claudette Schreuders: 'The Hero'

We had a heavy, unexpected shower of rain today. It lasted so long that the hard, sun-dried earth softened. Only on its fragrance of earth-wetness rising up were there traces of the smell of dry dust. The brooding rain clouds, scattered apart, had no time to gather together and flee away. They were trapped in the sunset. The flat earth and the stark, black thorn trees became a vast pool, touched and shaded by the gold-and-red streaked sky. The insects that live in the earth cracks and under the stones all tumbled out, quivering with amazement. They claimed the earth, and now pulse out a rhythm of repetitive sound, each distinct, yet blending in harmonious restraint.

Bessie Head 'Earth and Everything' in *The Cardinals with meditations and short stories*, David Phillip, Cape Town, 1993.

The exhibition, 'Earth & Everything', presents paintings, drawings, sculptures, assemblages and installations by thirteen contemporary artists from South Africa. It includes a diversity of work from both rural and urban areas.

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Recent Art from South Africa

Derrick Nxumalo
Jeremy Wafer
Tito Zungu
Walter Oltmann
Penny Siopsis
Fanozi Chickenman Mkize
Bonnie Ntshalintshali
Johannes Mashego Segogela
Noria Mabasa
Anton Karstel
Kay Hassan
Titus Moteyane
Claudette Schreuders

Some exhibitors have received higher education in fine art whilst others have had very little formal education at all. 'Earth & Everything' proposes some common concerns between these diverse artists, but, whilst recognising the source of their work in the political and economic reality of South Africa, it does not claim or presume to be representative of the complexity of that country. The exhibition can only be a construct of art from South Africa, offering ways of seeing both difference and sameness through European eyes. 'Earth & Everything' has been selected by Roger Palmer, artist and lecturer in Fine Art at Glasgow School of Art and Tessa Jackson, Director of Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol.

Preparations for the exhibition

In 1991, during a prolonged stay in South Africa, Roger Palmer grew familiar with the work of several of the artists who are represented in 'Earth & Everything'. Gavin Younge's influential book *Art from the South African Townships* (1988) had already offered an insightful overview. Paintings by Titus Moteyane and Derrick Nxumalo were permanently displayed at Palmer's research base, the Centre for African Studies in the University of Cape Town, where he also came across Jeremy Wafer's sculpture. At the same Centre, Roger Palmer exhibited in a two-person show with Chickenman Mkize in 1992. Noria Mabasa's groups of clay figures were seen in the survey exhibition, *Art from South Africa*, organised by the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford in 1990, and Johannes Mashego Segogela's carved wooden sculptures were introduced through a friend's private collection in Cape Town. In June 1993, Tessa Jackson joined Roger Palmer in South Africa for an exploratory visit.

We spent two weeks exploring the terrain by car and visiting artists, museums and galleries in the Cape, Kwazulu/Natal and the Gauteng (Johannesburg and surrounding area). As European visitors with ambitions to curate a South African exhibition for Britain, we invited prominent artists, curators and teachers in different parts of the country to act as advisors for our project. From the outset, the informal group of experts has been an invaluable source of advice. Whilst we were aware of the enormous range of contemporary art in South Africa, our primary commitment was to make a coherent selection of works by a small group of artists that we both found challenging as British viewers. On a subsequent joint visit to South Africa in 1995, we met several artists whose work seemed to expand our thematic interest; much later, 'Earth & Everything' emerged as a title for this diversity. During the lengthy preparations for this exhibition, we visited all the contributing artists in their working environments, and many others who were on our various lists of

possible exhibitors. Inevitably through limitations of space, several artists whom we both found very interesting and who received us with generosity have had to be excluded from the exhibition.

Themes

'Earth & Everything' has two parallel and overlapping themes; it presents a broad view of South African landscape, both rural and urban, real and imagined. There are images of desolate spaces and others of dense habitation - a highly detailed overview of known territory presented as a form of creative mapping, or a place of subverted road-signs and fantastic flying machines. The exhibition also presents images of the people of South Africa. Through different approaches to figurative sculpture, installation, painting and assemblage, representations of ethnicity and gender are explored alongside mythical and allegorical figures. The figurative sculptures in particular, presented in the form of tableaux, suggest a strong sense of a landscape and its people.

The text in this Information Leaflet has been edited from the full-colour leaflet **'Earth & Everything' Recent Art from South Africa** produced by Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol and written by Tessa Jackson, Roger Palmer and Josephine Lanyon. The colour leaflet contains extensive background information about all the artists and is available from CCA Gallery Guides and CCA Book Shop, Price: £1.00.

GUIDED TOURS

Free, informal, 30 minute guided tours with CCA Tour Guides take place every Saturday and Sunday at 1.15 pm.

TALKS

A series of free, informal, Saturday talks in the Galleries.
All the talks start at 2 pm and last approximately one hour.

Saturday 15th June

With reference to works in the exhibition, Jeanne Cannizzo explores the anthropology of art; art forms and artefacts; collecting art and culture.

Saturday 22nd June

Roger Palmer is co-curator of 'Earth & Everything', an artist and lecturer at Glasgow School of Art, who has lived and worked in South Africa. His talk provides an ideal introduction to the exhibition and its history.

Saturday 6th July

Maggie Chetty of Strathclyde Community Relations Council is joined by colleagues from Proteus and Thistles, to discuss their experiences linking multi-cultural communities in Scotland and South Africa.

Saturday 20th July

Tessa Jackson, Director of Arnolfini in Bristol and co-curator of 'Earth & Everything', discusses the exhibition with Jeremy Wafer, one of the exhibiting artists.

**If you would like
to know more
about the artists
and the
exhibitions, please
ask the Gallery
Guide on duty**

cca

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